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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 NICOSIA 001607

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [TU](#) [CY](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH CYPRIOT POLITICS: AMBITIOUS LEFTISTS,
BICKERING NATIONALISTS, AND "OPERATION MUFTI"

* Missing Section 001 *

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July 2006, and reportedly opens conversations with Talat by asking "How's Ahmet?" This close relationship -- along with recent sightings of Yonluer together with Avci and Disli -- has fueled press and coffee-shop speculation that he was a key facilitator in alleged AKP efforts to force a "government" change, in what has become known as "Operation Mufti." (As if to underscore his image as a deal-maker, Yonluer took an urgent call from Avci, in hushed tones, during a meeting with poloff as the government crisis was unfolding.)

¶11. (C) Less conspiracy-minded observers, however, note that Yonluer is a shameless self-promoter and publicity seeker who longs to be seen as a political fixer -- perhaps the best way for a religious leader to burnish his reputation in the avowedly secular, heterodox Turkish Cypriot community. Sources close to Soyer admit that CTP appointed Yonluer "TRNC Mufti" in 2005 as a gesture of goodwill to Erdogan, but deny he played a role in the reshuffle. Indeed, Soyer's private secretary (protect) told us that the "PM" had gotten a "green

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light" from Erdogan to dump Serdar during a private meeting just after the June elections, long before Yonluer began meeting with Avci or others. Even those who do not know about Erdogan's "green light" also suspect that it was the wily Soyer, rather than Erdogan, Disli, or Yonluer, who initiated the reshuffle for his own political purposes. Whether it was Erdogan or Soyer who came up with the idea of casting out Serdar, however, it seems clear that AKP at the very least had advance knowledge of the move and approved of it.

WATCH YOUR BACK, JACK: NATIONALISTS PLOT REVENGE

¶12. (C) Outflanked by the CTP and undermined by defections from their ranks, the nationalist right has been left to lick its wounds. The UBP and DP -- bitter rivals until a few days ago -- have been thrown together into a tactical, anti-CTP alliance (the "Axis of Jilted," said one English-speaking wag). DP and UBP have said they would boycott "parliament" to protest the new "government" and the alleged shenanigans

surrounding its formation.

¶13. (C) Meanwhile, ex-"president" and nationalist icon Rauf Denktash has criticized Erdogan by name and called for "patriotic" forces to rally against the CTP, the AKP, the Mufti -- plus the Annan Plan and the EU for good measure. Friends of Denktash Senior have darkly hinted to us that the Old Man has been in contact with "friends" in the media, military, and government on the mainland seeking their "support." Some Turkish Cypriots voice quiet concern that the blatant expulsion of Serdar from power (this is the first time in history there has not been a Denktash in high office in the "TRNC") may incur the wrath of the Deep State.

MORE TURKISH THAN THE TURKS?

¶14. (C) CTP insiders, however, seem cautiously optimistic they can get away with it. For one thing, CTP is confident in its "good" relationship with AKP, and party leaders feel that as long as Erdogan and the army continue their uneasy truce on the mainland, pro-settlement leftists can continue to rule here. Furthermore, apart from the octogenarian Rauf Denktash (who is a political has-been at home, whatever his reputation on the mainland) there is no obvious figure on the right to unify rivals DP and UBP -- both of which face serious internal leadership problems. And as the UBP's dejected outgoing president confided to us, without access to pork and patronage, any party challenging CTP is at a serious disadvantage.

¶15. (C) Most importantly, perhaps, CTP believes that it has established its credentials as credible defenders of Turkish Cypriot -- and Turkish -- interests, even though Talat and his allies were initially mistrusted by Denktash and the Deep State. "They were afraid we'd sell the farm," one CTP politburo member told us, recalling meetings where GOT representatives had "panicked" over Talat's plans to cooperate with the Committee Missing Persons, open churches, or negotiate with the Luxembourg presidency on a Varosha-for-trade swap (ref f). But, he noted, the current administration has held firm in UN talks (ref g). At the same time, its willingness to engage and seek the upper hand on issues like property -- where the Turkish Cypriots now have the Greek Cypriots on the run (ref h) -- have put the Turkish side in an "even better position than we were with Denktash," who simply refused to talk about property. This, said our politburo contact, may be enough to reassure the Deep State, army, and others that they don't need a Denktash around. "Even if Erdogan some day loses power to the army,"

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